Some items of news: Dadie has not got his fellowship. Hilda Bewicke is a friend of Clive's: Arnold Bennett is having a Baby. Ethel's clothes are lovely — sleeves like pen & ink drawing — all one line. Nessa & Duncan are going to Italy. Princess Victoria has pneumonia.

THE HOGARTH PRESS

52 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1

Telephone: Museum 3488.

Francis Birrell may be offered Editorship: Had I married Sydney Waterlow I should have gone to Bangkok

A letter from Raymond just come. Much engaged.

29th March 1926

Hot X Buns. &c &c.

No letter from you for over a fortnight, but that may be, I suppose, something to do with the Foreign Office. Now you must pretend to be interested in your friend's fortunes: but it will all seem so remote & silly to you: you have forgotten a paper called the Nation; Leonard was literary editor once; & since Wednesday he is no longer. We have ~~res~~ resigned. Thank God. What a mercy — no more going to the office & reading proofs & racking ones brains to think who to get to write. We shall have to make £500 a year; & I shall sell my soul to Todd; but this is the first step to being free. — & we foreign travel & dawdling about England in a motor car; feel 10 years younger, utterly irresponsible, & please, dearest Vita, do make Harold do the same thing. One walks into one's upper room, carrying the tray, at 8.30, & say "By the way I'm going to give up the Nation today" — or the Foreign Office, as the case may be: Its over in 10 minutes. Seriously, giving up appointments (this is the 4th time since we married) is the only pleasure in the world. He will be there till October or July as a matter of fact. (So send articles)

I cannot think what it will interest you to be told of, now you are embedded in Persia. I see you always picking little bright red flowers high up on stony mountains. Raymond (give him my love) will be with you now; & so you will have heard all about London — how Clive is in love, & Lady Colefax, & all that. Do you infer from this that Sybil is in love? No, no. She has not been tainted by that passion: she has merely stayed with Coolidge, Esme Howard, Doug. & Mary, Charlie Chaplin; been four thousand miles in a motor car; &c &c. Does it matter what Sybil does? A coal mine; heaven,

its all the same. She paints a little harder—that is all. Then there were Lord Ivor Churchill; Roger Fry & Virginia Woolf — all very brilliant at Clive's the other night: & Walter Sickert, Therese Lessore, Leigh Ashton, all very silent at Vanessa's the other night; & a ghastly party at Rose Macaulays, where in the whirl of meaningless words I thought Mr O'Donovan said Holy Ghost, whereat he said "The whole Coast" & I asking "Where is the Holy Ghost?" got the reply "Wherever the sea is" "Am I mad, I thought, or is this wit?" "The Holy Ghost?" I repeated. "The whole Coast" he shouted. & so we went on, in an atmosphere so repellent that it became, like the smell of bad cheese, repulsively fascinating: Robert Lynds, Gerald Goulds, Rose Macaulays, all talking shop, & saying Masefield is as good as Chaucer, & the best novel of the year is Shining Domes by Mildred Peake; until Leonard ~~[illegible]~~ shook all over, picked up what he took to be Mrs Goulds napkin, ~~[illegible]~~, & the foundations of this tenth rate literary respectability (all gentlemen in white waistcoats, ladies shingled, unsuccessfully) shook to its foundations. I kept saying "Vita would love this"

Now would you?

Now its Wednesday. I did get a letter from you—a nice dumb letter. When I went to Italy for the first time I too picked up a clod of earth. A very nice letter. I wish I could write one to match; but for 2 days we have had nothing but talk, interruptions & the whole blessed thing—Press & Nation—in the frying pan. This is exciting, but harasses the mind. It would bore you to go into it: it is only a question whether we shan't give up the Press too, cut adrift, & make a bolt. Manuscripts shower; authors never cease coming: Viola's book again held up—in short the bother & the work have a little overcome us, for the moment—whether we can keep up with it, I mean. But it is also great fun. If you had come in yesterday you would have seen me with the floor all strewn with little squares of paper, like the harnessed pig, making an index for Viola.

NYPL

HAMILL & BARKER 2/8/62

13th April
1926

52 Tavistock Sqre.

Here is a cheque. See what you might have had if you had stuck to the old firm – cheques for £10 every other day perhaps; & Distinction which rightly has no price. But I'm in a rush, going off to Iwerne Minster today, throwing myself upon life practically naked. This means only that we shall range about Dorset for 5 days & neither read nor write.

I got a letter from you last night, & you say I am to write once more. This is an anticlimax; I had written my farewell. But I wish particularly to impress upon you the need of care in travel. Remember your dog Grizzle & your Virginia, waiting you: both rather mangy; but what of that? These shabby mongrels are always the most ~~de~~ loving, warm hearted creatures. Grizzle – Virginia will rush down to meet you – they will lick you all over. So then, when you are tempted to folly, tremble on the brink of a precipice, sleep out on the steppes, & so on (coming through Russia where Raymond hasnt been you can lie as much as you like) remember how desolated we shall both be should you lose a hair of your head, or scratch one scratch on those lovely pillar like legs. (The Greeks & Hebrews used "pillars" as a metaphor: I now see why. Often one catches up Greeks & Hebrews in living.) I am rather repentant at having criticised your poem, without really reading it through. I find reading in type script rather hard. Give me the proofs & let me furbish up a proper opinion. But I dont understand – are you still adding? Then when does it come out? I expect I only meant something about descriptive poetry needing a ~~foro~~ human figure in the middle. Vegetables become rather crushing. I expect though it is

there; only a little obscured by detail (& that may be my slovenly reading.) Lets go through it carefully together before you send it to Byard. Byard will smoke his big cigar, & eat his blood red chop. I, doing neither, dont print your poems. How odd it is — the effect geography has on the mind! I write to you differently now you're coming back. The pathos is melting. I felt it pathetic when you were going away; as if you were sinking below the verge. Now that you are rising, I'm jolly again: But what news is there to bring you of the outer world? Precious little, what Sybil Colefax calls news. No dinners, no parties. Everyone away. Sybil, Ethel, Clive, Mary, Vanessa — all in rural retreat. So I have been doing up parcels with Angus: standing at a table with string & paper & hearing scraps of interviews. Advertising touts, with tempting offers: Mr. Betjeman, Editor of Youth: Mr. Morell, the printer. All this goes forward, as I tie, as I tie — (D'you remember "Sweeping up leaves, the refrain in Hardy's poem?) my mind is all awash with various thoughts; my novel; you; shall you take me for a drive to the sea?; the cinema; & so on; when the door opens & Dadie comes in. Desultory conversation goes forward; for I have to think what I'm doing, & not close the ends of parcels for abroad — perhaps my greatest sin as a packer. At last, I say I want tea. Dadie comes up for 5 minutes. Bell rings. Eddy comes. Telephone rings: Duncan is coming. We all have tea together. Make toast. Room frightfully untidy. Never mind. Eddy is very well & spruce. Duncan like an old bundle, which is coming undone in the middle. He perpetually hitches up his trousers as he talks. We all chatter hard, about music. Eddy explains about 19th Century music & rhetoric. Duncan attacks: but seldom uses the word he means: sometimes has to ~~be~~ unbutton his waistcoat while endeavouring: very interesting: we compare movies & operas: I'm writing that for Todd: rather brilliant. All, to me, highly congenial, & even a little exciting, in the spring light: hammers tapping outside; trees shaking green in the Square: suddenly we find its 7 & all jump up.

Oh I've no time — I cant write sense or word, not to say Grammar, with Leonard & Grizzle, & Chappells piano tuner all flourishing about, & saying Are you ready, ~~are~~ have you Mr Sackville

Westi [illegible]? & the general atmosphere of movement & departure. I had wanted to go into the matter of profound natural happiness; as revealed to me yesterday at a family party of an English Banker; where the passion & joy of sons & daughters in their own society struck me almost to tears with self-pity & amazement. Nothing of that sort do we any of us know – profound emotions, which are yet natural & taken for granted, so that nothing inhibits or restrains. How deep these are, & unself-conscious. There is a book, called Father & Son, by Gosse, which says that all the coast of England was fringed with little ~~sea~~ sea anemones & lovely tassels of seaweed & sprays of emerald moss & so on, from the beginning of time till Jan. 1858, when, for some reason, hordes of ~~cler~~ Clergy & spinsters in mushroom hats & goggles began collecting, & so ~~[illegible]~~ scraped & rifled the coast that this accumulation was destroyed for ever. A parable this, of what we have done to the ~~deep~~ deep deposits of family happiness. But

I'll flood you with all this when you come. When?
And take care.

Also, I will tell you about Anna Karenina, & the predominance of sexual love in 19th Century fiction, & its growing unreality to us who have no real condemnation in our hearts any longer for adultery as such. But Tolstoy poises all his book on that support. Take it away, say, no it doesn't offend me that A.K. should copulate with Vronsky, & what remains?

Put to yourself that question on the Steppes with the owls hooting & a melancholy wolf slinking behind the everlasting birch trees.

Leonard's
Grizzle's } love.
Virginia's

y V.W.

Sybil writes: "I'm flung into writing to you as I actually dreamed last night that you'd gone to a theatre <u>twice</u> with Dottie — now to be called Dorothy Wellesley!!!" Well: what is the interpretation?

Tuesday

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It's all infinitely good of you — what we thought of, for your travels, was to have large, numerous photographs.

At the same time, we are a little ~~[illegible]~~ conscience (oh damn! I've been addressing envelopes all the afternoon, & cannot write a word) I was saying we feel a little guilty about taking you from the prosperous & swelling Heinemann. Let's talk it over in cold blood.

How about coming — I could come a<u>lone</u> for the <u>night</u> on Friday: week end impossible, owing to dining out Saturday.

Or, Leonard says he could come & would like to come for Saturday night the week following— that is 12th (I mean, we could both come.) But then we were not asked then. So choose which you like. Only let me know. (I mean this *next* Friday, 4th, I could come:)

You are utterly wrong about Viola. Why read memoirs as if they were poems? Don't you see her vulgarity is *not* vulgar, her reticence is *not* unashamed: an aroma— she aims at that: life; fact: not the thing go for— but I cant make you understand: try reading as if you were catching a swarm of bees; not hunting down one dart like dragon fly. Please, please, dont ask a soul ever. Were not we suffocated with souls? The Sitwells, & Gertrude Stein tonight.

V.W. Love to Pippin

Monday

Next Saturday then, God willing. I'd have liked to come on Friday — but, another confession — I've had to take to the sofa with some kind of influenza & if a germ remains or a headache or anything nothing will induce me to afflict you, much though I should like to. Shall Leonard bring you up?

Sybil did ask us on 15th: we refused: now, to meet you, I've accepted — Lord, how one does treat that woman, & seen privately alone at tea here, she's so nice: only glittering as a Cheap Cherry in her own house.

Are you so intensely, completely happy that one drop more would make you spill? Is this solitude? I'm thinking of retiring to Rodmell too totally.

Yr

VW.

Not much news. Rather cross — Would like a letter. Would like in Garden. Would like Vita. Would like 15 puppies with their tails chopped off, 3 doves, & a little conversation. The Sitwells was a ghastly frost. I put it in to make you feel a bumpkin — & it did, & thus confirmed my view that other peoples parties have a mystery & glamour theirs' own are without. Are you writing poetry? If so, then tell me what is the difference between that emotion & the prose emotion? What drives you to one & not the other? I am trying to work this out, ~~for~~ not for Vogue; so dont snub me. Last night I read some poetry of yours in an anthology & liked it: so let me have your Georgics complete. My novel is very very bad: all my worst faults displayed: so I daresay its as well I have to drop it for the time. Is Montaigne any good? — ~~the~~ the one by the woman whose name I cant remember. And are

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HAMILL + BARKER 2/5/62